



EXHIBIT 10  
DATE 3/8/2013  
SB 306

American Civil Liberties Union  
of Montana  
P.O. Box 1317  
Helena, MT 59624  
www.aclumontana.org

March 8, 2013

Dear Chairman Kerns and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

The American Civil Liberties Union of Montana supports SB 306 by Senator Alan Olson. This bill removes the sex-specific limitation in the Partner Family Member Assault statute and brings the statute into compliance with constitutional equal protection principles.

As you can imagine, it is a rare occurrence when the ACLU of Montana advocates for the expanded application of a criminal statute, but we do so in this instance in order to further the general principle that all Montanans should be treated the same under the law, regardless of their sex. The language used in current law allows for disparate treatment of victims and defendants based solely on the sex of the people involved. Specifically, the provision that SB 306 seeks to remove states that assaultive behavior against a partner is punishable under this code section only if the victim and the accused are of different sexes. This provision is inconsistent with the equal protection principles guaranteed in our state constitution and recently led a state district court to rule the statute unconstitutional and unenforceable.

Generally speaking, all people should be treated the same under the law, with no special exceptions made or different rules applied based on someone's sex. By striking this provision, SB 306 corrects a serious constitutional violation and creates parity for victims and among defendants.

We respectfully urge you to vote "do pass" on SB 306.

Respectfully,

Niki Zupanic  
Public Policy Director

